



### Youth Sporting Events Grant Program

#### Support youth sporting events in rural, small/midsize towns and suburban regions of Oregon

Youth sporting events offer many benefits to its participants, their families and the host communities. Metropolitan areas attract and frequently can afford to host such events, however, rural, small and midsize municipalities can face financial obstacles to attract and host youth sporting events. These potential events, plus the community and economic benefits they bring, could be captured through the proposed grant program. Just a few examples of recent lost opportunities include:

- ✓ Corvallis missed out on hosting the American Junior Golf Association (AJGA) because of a \$50,000+ sponsorship requirement from local sources.
- ✓ Major League Quidditch - \$5,000 bid fees.
- ✓ The US Tennis Association Tournaments have been lost because financial support at a meaningful level was unachievable.

*Sport Oregon* is a non-profit organization whose mission is to support sports tourism and youth sports. This mission improves the physical and mental health for our youth and provides economic stimulus for Oregon's communities. This mission would benefit from a partnership with the state to provide grant funds in order to help Oregon's smaller and rural communities attract and host youth sporting events.

#### Support the Physical and Mental Health of Oregon's Youth

Our communities are grappling with drug and mental health epidemics amongst our youth. Several studies have evaluated the benefits that sports participation has in preventing drug and alcohol use among youth, their families and communities. **The Aspen Institute's State of Play youth survey connected increased physical activity to better mental health:**

- 1) Children who are physically active reported more excitement, happiness and motivation, while those who are inactive reported greater nervousness, anxiety, worry and depression.

- 2) 25% of youth who said they had zero days of physical activity reported feeling depressed or hopeless nearly every day, more than twice the rate (11%) of those who reported being active every day. The results also suggested that youth who play an organized sport or physical activity have better mental health.
- 3) State of Play recommended that communities use sports and recreation to help address the mental health crisis, such as coach training, aligning sports and recreation with existing local mental health efforts, and creating public awareness about mental health in youth sports.

A study by the **President's Council on Sports, Fitness & Nutrition Science Board in 2020, found that 73% of parents believe sports benefit their child's mental health. Participating in sports is associated with:**

- Lower rates of anxiety and depression
- Lower amounts of stress
- Higher self-esteem and confidence
- Reduced risk of suicide
- Less substance abuse and fewer risky
- Increased cognitive performance.
- Increased creativity
- Greater enjoyment of all forms of physical activity
- Improved psychological and emotional well-being for individuals with disabilities.

The University of Michigan's analysis of data from 191,000 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders from 1997 to 2014 found that **kids who were highly and moderately involved in sports and exercise were less likely to use drugs than those who reported no involvement.**

### **Support Oregon Families and Communities**

Oregon families with kids participating in sports know that it can frequently require travel, including out of state for soccer tournaments in Arizona or California, volleyball tournaments in Nevada or Texas, baseball games in Washington or Idaho. Families are spending money on airfare, hotels, restaurants, and tourist attractions. Oregon should be hosting more of these events – saving Oregon families from the travel costs and bringing those dollars to Oregon communities. This is particularly impactful to underserved communities and youth whose families face economic strains. These young sport enthusiasts and their families often miss out on participating entirely.

Establishing a youth sporting events grant fund will empower *Sport Oregon* to help attract state, regional and national sporting events in Oregon that benefit our local youth athletes, teams and communities. It will help to identify potential sporting event opportunities and assist local jurisdictions to determine their ability to host the event.

### **This Legislation Will:**

- Provide financial support to local jurisdictions and nonprofit organizations that wish to host "youth sporting events", which means any kind of sporting event for participants under the age of 25.
- *Sport Oregon* will provide the staff and manage the grant program, and report on its expenditures to the state.
- An advisory group may assist *Sport Oregon* in evaluating and awarding the grants.
- To be eligible for a grant, a local government body or a not-for-profit organization must have secured (or affirmed commitment for) local funding or in-kind support from any source at the time of application.
- Appropriates \$1.5. million to the *Sport Oregon Foundation*